

COMMUNITY RESOURCES USED FOR TEN UNMARRIED
MOTHERS BY THE FAMILY SERVICE AGENCY OF SAVANNAH INCORPORATED
FROM 1944 TO 1946
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Family Service Agency of Savannah became a social agency when its charter was granted and Board of Directors was created in 1909 under the name of Associated Charities. Miss Mary Richmond, of the Russell Sage Foundation, recommended its first General Secretary, Miss Helen Pendleton, who began work with the agency the following year.

In the beginning, the agency was concerned with the economic and health problems of the community affecting family life of all groups.¹ Through the years the agency has developed services for the community. Its present function covers the following services, namely, counseling on personal problems, uncovering and implementing the use of other resources in the city and county, making available a homemaker's service, providing financial assistance and other services to families of children in Savannah children's centers, and participating in the educational program for professional training and social research. Funds administered by the agency are from the Community Chest and private contributions. The present staff consists of the Executive Secretary, office manager, office secretary, five case workers, and a part-time psychiatrist.

The problem of the unmarried mother is as old as the institution of marriage. The social history of England and America is colored

¹George C. Baldwin, Associated Charities (Savannah, [n.d.]), I, 92.

with harsh punishment accorded the unmarried mother and her child during the colonial days.

In English law, followed in the colonies, the mother of a child born out of wedlock was known as a "lewd" woman and the child a "bastard." In Puritan settlements the mother might be required to confess her sin before the congregation. She might be publicly whipped, placed in stocks or imprisoned. Even after she had suffered her legal punishment, her social punishment continued in ostracism. To help the child or the mother, it was believed, would increase the number of illegitimate births. The punishment prescribed for Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter--the life long wearing of the letter "A" for adultress--is fact, not fancy. This penalty will be found among the laws of the Plymouth Colony for 1658.¹

The father of the child, however, actually faced little inconvenience. His responsibility was difficult to prove, and his support seldom ordered. The burden of support was placed on the mother. If she could not carry on, the child was exposed to whatever methods the community had in caring for dependent children.

During the Nineteenth Century, the process of indenture, almshouse and private foster care was the plan for many unmarried mothers and their children. About 1850, institutions developed with labels such as "Heart Ease," "The Door of Hope," "Rescue Home" and others. For the more fortunate or financially able unmarried mother, care was found in the "private," "strictly confidential" and "safe" homes which provided escape from social disapproval.

The early Twentieth Century emphasizes marked slow changes in attitudes and programs planned for the unmarried mother. In 1911 and

¹Maud Morlock and Hilary Campbell, Maternity Homes for Unmarried Mothers (Washington, D. C., 1946), p. 7.

up to 1931, thirty-nine states enacted mother's pension laws, but only two states, Michigan and Nebraska, made provisions for a "mother without a husband." Twenty-nine of these states extended the benefits only to wedded mothers. While the remaining states made broad specifications as to character, good conduct and the like, they aimed to exclude the unmarried mother and her child.¹

The English laws influenced the early measures regarding the protection of the unmarried mother, but subsequent legislation is the result of having the father share in the responsibility and the recognition of the state for the well-being of all individuals.

The most advanced legislation for the protection of unmarried mothers has been enacted in Norway....if support cannot be secured from the father, the State supplies the assistance. Particular attention is given to securing proper care for the mother, and the State takes the initiative in establishing paternity. Both parents are held to the same right and degree of responsibility for the care of the child, and the children born out of wedlock have the same rights as those in wedlock.²

The passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 made possible assistance from the Federal Government in strengthening services to the unmarried mother. At present, every state in the country has a state department of public welfare with a child welfare division which covers provisions for the unmarried mother and her child.

The 1946 Annual Report of the Chief of the Children's Bureau indicates that the unmarried mother problem is of national and international significance. This report points out the following fact that:

¹Ruth Reed, Negro Illegitimacy in New York City (New York, 1926), p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 27.

Over 80,000 babies are born out of wedlock each year.... A group of children whose needs call for special attention during the year are children born out of wedlock in other countries for whom American citizens are named as fathers. This group is indicated by the fact that at one time 22,000 children born out of wedlock in England were receiving allowances from American men in the armed forces.¹

The foregoing statistical data places emphasis upon the magnitude of the problem.

The interest of the Family Service Agency of Savannah in the problem of the unmarried mother is evidenced by the increasing number of cases coming to its attention year by year. The special significance of this problem for the agency is revealed in the short-time financial rehabilitation service policy of the agency which usually covers a period of three to six months. The agency further limits its services by not attempting to assist financially where the possibility of self-help in a short period of time is remote. Within this short period, the case worker must help in understanding the many and varied factors in the situation of the unmarried mother.

In 1933, the writer had first contact with the Family Service Agency of Savannah when the unmarried mother problem was receiving much attention and consideration. During 1947-48, as a field work student in this same agency, much time was spent in an effort to understand the psychological factors influencing the behavior of the unmarried mother. In the light of this experience, the writer foresaw the need for studying the unmarried mother problem in Savannah and the vicinity.

¹United States Children's Bureau, Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Chief to the Secretary (Washington, D. C., 1947), p. 91.

Purpose of the Study

This study proposes to determine the extent and use of available resources in the Savannah Community for unmarried mothers; to study some of the motivating factors in the behavior of unmarried mothers as revealed in selected case records of the Family Service Agency of Savannah; and to study what resources are needed to extend services to unmarried mothers in the community.

Scope and Limitations

This study is limited to ten unmarried mothers who were known to the Family Service Agency, Incorporated, of Savannah from the period of 1944 through 1946. These cases were selected from a random sampling of forty-five cases closed during this period. There was some limitation as to social history, but the records showing sources of referrals, services requested and rendered determined the final selection of cases used.

In addition, limited resources in the community made it difficult for the writer to explore the degree to which the agency had been able to make case work services available to the unmarried Negro mother. Likewise, other agencies which might have served in a collaborative capacity did not have adequate records on those cases for the unmarried mothers which they have handled. It is hoped, however, that the study will serve to point out what the Family Service Agency Incorporated was able to accomplish on the ten cases discussed in this thesis.

Method of Procedure

Data for this was obtained from a study of 10 cases of unmarried mothers who were Negroes. The selection was made at random with the help of a schedule and supplemented from interviews with the executive of the agency and interested staff members. In addition, reports and official records of the agency were carefully reviewed and literature pertinent to the subject of unmarried motherhood and social work was explored.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN THE SAVANNAH COMMUNITY¹

When James Edward Oglethorpe landed on the Savannah Bluff in 1733, the social problems were created with the steady growth of the community. The efforts of all peoples, their culture, individualism and the industrial bulwark of cotton and naval stores form the background of the "city by the sea." These have been transmitted into organized activities in related fields in the Savannah community and represent the interest and community responsibility in trying to meet increasing social disorganization.

In many areas the type of service private and public agencies give is fairly well represented, but the extent to which it is available to all peoples of the community is too limited to be adequate. At present, about sixty agencies and organizations engaged in social work and related fields are classified under the following headings: family welfare and assistance, child welfare, health, group work and recreation, and coordinating agencies or organizations.²

The family welfare and financial assistance agencies are the community's means of helping persons or families who are struggling with social, economic and personal problems beyond their capacity. The services include not only ways of meeting the external needs of people

¹The Savannah community refers to the territorial lines of the county and the city which is the site of Chatham County. Community resources discussed are inclusive of Savannah and Chatham County.

²Lillian W. Spencer, Social Service Directory (Savannah, 1944), p. 1.

who are homeless, sick or in financial need but offer a way of helping which enables the troubled person to use whatever resources are available to him. There are fourteen agencies rendering multiple social service, and they work primarily with individuals or family groups.

Twenty-two agencies serve the child in his home or away from his home under the child welfare programs. Approximately seven agencies or organizations provide health services for the community exclusive of hospital care. The group work and recreation services are made possible by twelve agencies under private and public auspices. Six other coordinating organizations implemented and supplemented the total welfare services in the community.

Of the ten unmarried mothers coming to the attention of the agency, four, or less than one-half, were referred by three case work agencies; the health agency referred two and a group work agency one, and the others were referred by citizens. The referrals were made by landlords, a Y.W.C.A. director, a Housing Authority supervisor, a Health Center supervisor, Florence Crittenton Home supervisor, Department of Public Welfare worker, and an army officer. These sources of referrals indicated that there is no centralized case work service for unmarried mothers in the community. In addition, they show that there exists among some agencies and laymen some understanding of the problems and handicaps of the unmarried mother and the realm of services offered by the Family Service Agency of Savannah.

An appraisal of existing services by agencies and organizations in the community for unmarried mothers revealed that the problem, in its broad aspect, is social and psychological, and it is too complex to be

handled effectively by any one group working independently. Instances which showed a changing attitude in the community toward the unmarried mother were found through the services of the institutions and agencies.

The total facilities of the Savannah Municipal Health Center are available to all unmarried mothers. The 1946 Pre-Natal Clinic records of the Center showed that 214 unmarried mothers were served in the clinic during the year. One hundred-six of these mothers received free permits for hospitalization; thirty-four secured the services of the city and county physicians in home deliveries; and twenty-one used the Center's mid-wife service.¹ To what extent other physical, emotional and social problems were presented by these mothers and to what extent inter-referrals were made by social agencies was not indicated by the records. But one might conclude that all of these unmarried mothers need individualized service and treatment beyond the scope of the public health nurse. Neither the Pre-Natal Clinic nor the hospitals offer case work services, but generally the unmarried mother is referred from the Health Center to the Department of Public Welfare or the Family Service Agency of Savannah to assist a mother in working out plans for herself and baby. The focus in the Health Center is on the physical needs of the unmarried mother; however, because of other needs presented in the contacts with the unmarried mother at a crucial moment in her life, it appears that the aim in the Center is to be assured that proper care for the mother is effected

¹From the files of the Pre-Natal Clinic, Savannah Health Center (Savannah, April 20, 1948).

through the medium of casework in some social agency.

The following case illustrates a referral made by Pre-Natal Clinic supervisor to the Family Service Agency of Savannah.

Case 1

A white mother, age 18, was referred for help with placement plans for her unborn child. She came from a nearby rural community to work in the shipyard, met an unknown soldier, and pregnancy resulted. She claims no contact with the alleged father. She wanted her condition kept from her mother but was willing to have a brother and sister informed. Three months after coming to the attention of the agency, her baby was born and placed in a nursery until plans could be worked out for the future. The mother possessed good physical and mental equipment. She was able to analyze and discuss the inadvisability of keeping the child. Six months later the baby was discharged from the nursery home to the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Public Welfare to be placed in an adoptive home. Two months after the adoption proceedings, the mother wrote the agency worker about her marriage but not to the baby's father. She expressed the hope that her husband would never know about her baby born out of wedlock.

This case showed the need for case work service in making plans and pointed out what was involved in giving help at an early stage of the problem through specialized and integrated services. In the Savannah community, the Health Center is a significant resource in the social rehabilitation of the unmarried mothers because in its approach to the mothers' problems assistance is made possible through referrals to a service that will help them attain health, social and economic adequacy.

Likewise, the Florence Crittenton Home offers a very real service to unmarried mothers. It was established in Savannah in 1902. The Home accepts only white unmarried girls of any religious faith under twenty-five years of age who are pregnant for the first time, and service is not restricted to residents. The total capacity of the Home is limited to fifteen girls at a time.

Of the seven white girls studied, only three were able to secure services at the Florence Crittenton Home. The Negro unmarried mothers are without maternity home services. They live with parents, or other relatives, or in a boarding home usually financed by the agency. The living arrangements for most of them are crowded and uncomfortable. On the whole, the housing problems presented in this study revealed that the home facilities for unmarried mothers in the community are limited and inadequate. This situation indicates that the community has not broadly comprehended the personal and family needs inherent in this problem as agencies see them reflected in their statistics and case records.

The following case illustrates the housing problem of an unmarried unattached Negro mother.

Case 2

An interested citizen requested help for a nineteen year old, expectant, unmarried mother who was without relatives or means of support. The landlady was willing to furnish her a place to sleep but was unable to supply other needs. The social study revealed that the mother was left an orphan at birth, and the first fourteen years of her life were spent with a grandmother and family friend. After the death of these persons, she left the rural town, came to the city and had worked regularly for four years as a domestic. The alleged father had not been seen since he had been informed of her pregnancy.

After several unsuccessful efforts about a boarding place, the mother had to accept a room in a three-room home, where she had to share a bed with an elderly lady. After the birth of her baby, the room space allowed for only an improvised box bed for the baby. The agency offered financial help for four months, and later the mother advised the agency of her nursing care arrangements for the baby and of her plans for returning to work.

In this situation it is obvious that the mother's experiences were difficult for her, and many factors were inherent in her problem.

Ruth Reed observed that the problems most frequently affecting the adjustment of the Negro unmarried mother are: family separation by death, geographical location, desertion and others, poor adaptation to employment with need for vocational guidance, poor living arrangements and bad housing. She states that:

Negro girls in this country are employed at an earlier age than white girls, and this lessening of home influences during the early years might explain in part the higher rates of illegitimacy among Negro girls. Not only are Negro girls employed earlier than white girls, but they are employed in greater numbers in the group of occupations in which the illegitimacy rate is higher in all countries, for example, in domestic and personal service.¹

Maud Morlock and Hilary Campbell further point out the incompleteness of service in most communities for women in racial minority groups.

They state that:

Few communities provide homes for the protection of racial minority groups. Services should be available for all who need them. This lack of service stands out conspicuously, for example, when the welfare of Negro unmarried mothers and their babies is considered. Historically, little service for them was provided in the years reviewed here. An institution for dependent children of free Negro families was organized as early as 1822. Both the Society of Friends and the Roman Catholic Church were influential in the founding of some institutions for Negro children. But relatively few had service of any kind until foster home care for children came into use.²

From other studies made on unmarried mothers, it is evident that

¹Reed, op. cit., p. 40.

²Maud Morlock and Hilary Campbell, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

the problem is not confined to any one community group. Therefore, the amelioration of the problem should be complete maternity home or foster home service provided by the community for all unmarried mothers. Such service should be implemented by adequate case work services through a case work agency. An agency with flexible and receptive policies and procedures is able to help the unmarried mother understand herself and develop new experiences in finding a way out of her difficulty.

According to Maud Morlock, the case work method allows for individualized treatment for the mother and interpretation of her situation to her family, maternity home or foster home mother, and it is important in an effective program for all unmarried mothers faced with a crucial adjustment outside of their own home.¹

There were other agencies, such as the Department of Public Welfare through its Aid to Dependent Children's Program, which rendered a meaningful service to all unmarried mothers who could establish "suitability of home" or more specifically "eligibility." Moreover, the American Red Cross, Board of Education Lunch Program, Travellers Aid, Juvenile Court, Vocational Rehabilitation, Georgia State Employment Service, Child Placement Services, Children's Council, Big Sister's Organization, Social Service Exchange, and numerous religious groups make services available to unmarried mothers and their children.

In spite of the number of agencies serving the unmarried mother, it is fair to state that while these services are of a social welfare nature, the limited staffs, inadequate funds and segregated patterns

¹Ibid., pp. 18-22.

do not allow for adequate democratic practices, nor do they provide the full means of interpretation of the unmarried mother's problem to the community.

CHAPTER III

PERTINENT FACTORS ABOUT THE UNMARRIED MOTHERS

The family life and experiences of the unmarried mother have proven to be the most important factors in the molding of her social adjustment. Louise Silbert says that "The story of the client's current adjustment is the keynote to his life's drama. It portrays how he is acting out the many parts written into the text of his personality at an earlier date."¹

Personal Aspects

An analysis of the case records used in this study revealed that the ages of the mothers ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven. The educational attainment reached was from first to tenth grades. Included in the group of mothers was a mental defective who attended school a short while but never learned to read or write.

The immediate problems or needs as expressed in the applications of the unmarried mothers centered around concrete services. Five requested assistance with medical plans; in three cases, financial assistance was sought; and seven applicants were concerned about housing arrangements. Of the ten unmarried mothers, three wanted their babies placed until they could be adopted, and two others needed temporary placement until they could become adjusted at home. While these applications showed a need for manipulatory services, they also had elements of emotional components.

¹Louise Silbert, "How the Client's Current Adjustment Affects Treatment Possibilities," Journal of Social Case Work, XX (February, 1940), 331.

Florence Clothier, in her study of unmarried mothers, concluded that unmarried motherhood in American culture represents a distorted and unrealistic way out of inner difficulties and is thus comparable to neurotic symptoms on the one hand and delinquent behavior on the other. The choice of unmarried motherhood as a way out or a solution of unconscious conflicts depends on external environmental factors.¹ In spite of the varied attitudes in a community regarding the unmarried mother, few families accept their unmarried daughter's pregnancy without deep concern. The case of Miss G. shows her father's interest in her problem.

Case 3

Miss G., age 22, came from a family of ten children. The family lived in the country, and when she became pregnant by a chance acquaintance, her father brought her to the city so that the other children in the family would not learn of her condition. The father tried two hospitals and the Y.W.C.A. before coming to the Family Service Agency. Miss G. needed medical help, housing and counseling on plans for herself and the baby. The father showed deep concern for his daughter's situation, and with much emotion, he agreed to assume responsibility for her.

Familial Groups

Two of the mothers in this study live with both parents. In both cases, family interest and support were secured and maintained throughout the agency's contact. Four mothers came from broken homes due to the death of one or both parents. Five of them lived in their family

¹ Florence Clothier, "Psychological Implications of Unmarried Parenthood," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XIII (July, 1943), 66.

groups before pregnancy but left home to live with relatives, friends, or in furnished rooms.

The families were of rural and urban background. Eight of the mothers expressed a feeling of satisfaction and comfort with the family's financial situation. The family head worked as farmers or unskilled laborers. All of the unmarried mothers came from fairly substantial homes, and only one family was previously known to a social agency. Six of the mothers were members of families with nine and ten siblings, and no difficulties in relationships were evidenced.

The following case illustrates the kind of family one unmarried mother had.

Case 4

Miss I., an attractive girl, age 19, was the sixth child in a family of eleven. The first ten years of her life were with the family in Mobile, Alabama. The family moved to a farm in Pye, Georgia, where they lived for seven years. Miss I. felt that the home had been a reasonable and comfortable one, and had never been away from home until she came to the Florence Crittenton Home. After six months at the home, she was unable to make a decision about plans for the baby, and the matron referred her to the agency for help in planning. In going over the familial situation with her, she spoke of her father as a stern person who supported them and wanted his children to have an education. No one in her family except her father felt like punishing her for the unmarried pregnancy. She had always been closer to her mother, was inclined to take advice from one brother and seemed close enough to her older brothers and sisters to tell them something of her situation.

Miss I. finished the ninth grade, but lost interest in school because she was thinking of getting married to the baby's father, her school sweetheart, who would soon be home on furlough. Through the Red Cross, it was learned that the putative father did not wish marriage and refused to acknowledge paternity of her baby.

The conclusions of Dorothy Cason in her study of forty-two unmarried mothers may well apply to the case of Miss I. "She was not promiscuous

but had fantasies about the father of her baby, was not of low intelligence but immature in her emotional reactions and her relations with other people and her surrounding."¹

One of the most widely held principles in the field of case work is recognition of the client's capacity to control and guide his own life and to make choices for himself that are necessary in helping him to adjust to society. To what extent Miss I's behavior was influenced by her father's "sternness" is not known, but her symptomatic behavior indicated a need for love and affection from a male person which she found in her boy friend.

The Alleged Fathers

The fathers, as well as the mothers, in an unmarried situation require consideration. Both should have an opportunity to think through their attitudes toward each other and what the relationship means to them. The father's ability to assume some economic responsibility for the child is important, but past studies show that much more is involved than the question of economic support. Marguerite H. Hayman claims that the core of the unmarried mother's problem may be "filled with heavy emotions" toward the putative father and her sexual experience. She may bring his name into focus immediately for practical reasons because she feels so keenly about him that she must talk. the fact that "there was or is a man in the picture comes out naturally as the

¹Dorothy Cason, "New Methods of Interpretation," Highlights, VIII (January, 1947), 3.

mother is ready and needing to talk and insight developed around definite steps in planning."¹

Some consideration of characteristics of the fathers in this study revealed that in five cases the men were enlisted in the United States Army. The ages ranged from nineteen to thirty years. Only one of the five service men acknowledged paternity and arranged for an allotment. Three of the fathers were "chance acquaintances" and knew nothing of the mothers' pregnancy. No mention of the father was made in two cases, and one mother refused to divulge the name of the father. Of the seven fathers mentioned, only one expressed a wish to be married. Three men were involved in one case where there were children of each. Father No. One supported his child, father No. Two offered no support, and Father No. Three offered occasional help. This unmarried mother claimed no further sexual relations with the fathers after pregnancy, and marriage was mentioned by one which she refused to accept.

The education and training of the fathers were generally limited. Two claimed a high school record, and the others ranged from second to seventh grades. Their occupational pursuits extended from farmers to truck drivers. They were also unmarried but claimed families.

Establishing paternity and support from the alleged father has value in indicating how ready both parties are to accept and face reality. "It is one tangible step through which the mother is helped to face realistically not only her feelings toward the man but the meaning of the child

¹Marguerite M. Hayman, "Casework Treatment of the Unmarried Mother" (Washington, D. C., United States Children's Bureau, 1947), p. 8 (Mimeographed.)

and the practical determination of future responsibilities for the child."¹
It may have less significance to the putative father, but it does make clear his responsibility and the extent to which he can assume it, how much it relieves him or possibly even frees him of further unwished-for involvement in the situation.

The case of Miss H. shows her attitude and feeling toward the alleged father of her child.

Case 5

Miss H., age 18, came from a family of nine children. She considered her home comfortable, attended school to the ninth grade and left to work in a dime store. She became quite fond of a soldier stationed nearby and tried to conceal her pregnancy from her mother. She made a direct request for complete care of her baby after its birth leading to adoption. Miss H. said she was not in love with the father who was overseas. They did not correspond, nor did she wish to communicate with him.

In the case of Miss H., hostility and a need to have revenge on the putative father were seemingly expressed by her wish not to see the father nor to keep her baby.

¹Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY RESOURCES USED

Mary Richmond set the tenet for judging the validity of community resources in an early approach to social problems.¹ Case work services not only embody the philosophy of Mary Richmond, but agencies operate on a widely accepted concept that treatment in the area of both psychological and concrete problems must be geared to the needs of the client and his capacity for making use of the community's resources. The extent of the service to the client is determined by cooperative relationships between agencies, and most important is the case worker's knowledge of the dynamics of human behavior, needs of people, community resources and the techniques related to helping a client.

As a first step toward understanding the joint relationship between the Family Service Agency, Incorporated, of Savannah, and the other agencies, it seemed essential to classify the resources used and services made available by each. The cases used in this study required the cooperation of community resources in the field of health, legal aid, shelter, private and public financial assistance, and other services.

Health Services

Historically, the Family Service Agency of Savannah and the

¹ Family Welfare Association of America, Through the Ages (New York, n.d.), p. 46.

Municipal Health Center of the City have been closely inter-related. The agency, when it was known as the Charity Organization Society, organized the first Community Committee on Tuberculosis Education in 1910.¹ Through the years, cooperative services and interpretation of them have developed. The Family Service Agency of Savannah made eighteen contacts with the Municipal Health Center regarding maternal and child hygiene services. The Health Center is composed of thirty-two official and lay organizations cooperating with the County Board of Health. Its purpose is to establish and carry out a public health program in the field of preventive medicine. It is equipped to meet more than fifteen major health services.²

Five unmarried mothers known to the Family Service Agency of Savannah before confinement received pre-natal services through the clinics and free hospital permits. The agency requested examination and immunization for the five babies placed in a nursery, bedside nursing for two mothers, health education and pediatric service for the children of four mothers.

Other services available to the unmarried mother through the Health Center are adult emergency dental care, a loan closet of clothing maintained for the maternity cases made possible by the George E. Thompson Chapter of the King's Daughters.³ Records did not show that

¹Baldwin, op.cit., p. 110.

²Spencer, op. cit., p. 78.

³Ibid.

these services were needed or utilized.

The task of appraising the number of unmarried mothers known to the Health Center needing case work services is difficult because of the lack of a social service department in the health and medical agencies where records would show some social factors inherent in the medical problems of the unmarried mother. In 1946, approximately 214 unmarried mothers were served by the Pre-Natal Clinic, and by 1947, the number was approximately 249. A social service department could have helped in determining how many of the approximately 463 unmarried mothers presented problems with social and psychological implications as well as physical.

The value of medical social service in the treatment of the unmarried mother has been effectively pointed out by Marian E. Russell. She states that:

The function of the medical social service department is to assist in the after care of ward and out-patients through the medium of social casework, so as to render their hospital care more effective and to restore them to health and to social and economic efficiency.....Medical social service departments should be equipped to do generic case work with individuals who have health problems...and bring into play the full resources of the patient and the community.¹

Following this line of thought, one might conclude that the factor in extending services given by the medical agency and arousing community consciousness in establishing standards of treatment for unmarried mothers is an adequate medical social service department.

¹ Marian E. Russell, "Responsibility of the Hospital to the Unmarried Mother and Her Child," Hospitals (August, 1938). Reprint.

In spite of the Health Center's lack of a medical social service department, the Pre-Natal Clinic Supervisor demonstrated an understanding of the need for case work services and made referrals of unmarried mothers to the Family Service Agency of Savannah.

Two of the mothers showed a need for psychiatric services, but such a service was not available in the Health Center.¹ Psychiatric consultation for one mother was secured by the Family Service Agency of Savannah through an out-of-town agency, and a private neuropsychiatrist for the other mother was obtained.

What the future collaborative relationship between the health and social agencies is to be cannot be definitely stated. But it seems fair to assume that with the present changing attitude toward community problems and the development of more cooperative planning among agencies, a higher degree of understanding and inter-agency services will result through the efforts of health and welfare agencies to expand social service in the community

Legal Assistance

The Home Service Division of the American Red Cross worked

¹Mental illness as a public responsibility has been accepted by Georgia. The prevention of mental illness in the community is untouched due to the lack of out-patient mental hygiene clinics. Patients are placed in jail pending admission to the State Hospital at Milledgeville and represent those persons who are a menace to the community. They do not constitute an adequate index for the large number of persons needing psychiatric help. A Mental Hygiene Society began functioning in the Savannah community in 1947. The Municipal Health Center Director has made known the need for medical social workers in the community.

closely with Family Service Agency of Savannah on legal matters pertaining to the dependents of veterans. There were three unmarried mothers who claimed that enlisted men located in other areas were the alleged fathers of their babies, and the Family Service Agency of Savannah referred them to the American Red Cross. Through its communication and legal assistance service, paternity and support were established for one unmarried mother. Two contacts were made with alleged fathers, but they refused to acknowledge paternity of the children in question.

In one situation of an unmarried mother who was in arrears with her rent and was about to be dispossessed, the agency referred her to the Chatham County Bailiff's office. The eviction proceedings were deferred until plans could be worked out for the mother. The Bailiff's office also functions as a contact agent for unmarried mothers to secure financial support from local putative fathers. Three mothers were informed of this service, but they expressed a wish not to force support from the fathers.

In one case which was presented as a delinquency problem, the Family Service Agency of Savannah and the local Juvenile Court integrated services in interest of mother. The mother's serious neglect and rejection of her child resulted in the child being removed from the home by order of the court. The judge and his probation staff of the Juvenile Court have always used the social work agencies in the community on a cooperative basis. More recently, the Juvenile Court exemplified the philosophy and practice as expressed by Alice S. Nutt when it referred cases of delinquency to the Family Service Agency of Savannah for social study and at the same time retained its

custodial and protective services to the cases.¹

A major service with legal implications was rendered by the Child Welfare Division of the Chatham County Department of Public Welfare. This included the protection of children necessitating adoption or born out of wedlock and financial planning for these children requiring placement in foster homes.

The Family Service Agency of Savannah referred four babies out of the ten to the Child Welfare Division for adoption, and adoption plans for three of them were completed before the agency terminated contacts with the mothers. To what extent the Child Welfare Division accepted responsibility for the children placed in foster homes was not indicated in the agency records. County funds were used exclusively in the care of these children placed, and it might be concluded that services were limited by the inadequacy of local funds.

Shelter Accommodations

Of the ten unmarried mothers studied, seven required assistance in ascertaining shelter, and this service was limited because of limited community facilities. The Family Service Agency of Savannah made contacts with the Department of Public Welfare and the Travellers Aid Society, but neither agency had a home service list available. Further contacts and results showed that a district public health nurse assisted in securing housing for one mother; a private boarding home

¹Spencer, op.cit., p. 33.

was secured for two mothers; two went to live with relatives; while other mothers shared rooms in private families. The Savannah Housing Authority cooperated in one case where the total family of the unmarried mother needed shelter care. Maternity home care was obtained for one mother through an out-of-town agency.

The housing problems presented in the ten cases indicated that the Family Service Agency of Savannah is without a boarding foster home plan or register and that there are no planned facilities in the community for meeting the problem of shelter for unmarried mothers. Constance C. Fisher points out that the remedy for such a situation is a day-by-day job of social interpretation to the community and to private and public agency boards.¹

Maud Morlock says that:

A few states have given public welfare departments certain responsibilities for children born out-of-wedlock. Certain cities at the present time are undertaking to provide a centralized case work service for all unmarried mothers. Maternity homes have for many years made a valuable contribution to this program. Foster-home care has been used less widely, partly because of lack of funds, but its usefulness and effectiveness have been demonstrated.²

To what extent the local Department of Public Welfare can assume responsibility and accept the challenge depends upon the finances from local funds for such services. The shelter needs of unmarried mothers as a problem calls for having the facts, for cooperation between agencies which work closely with unmarried mothers, and for obtaining

¹Constance C. Fisher, "Cooperative Case Work Relations," Highlights, II (June, 1941), 57.

²Maud Morlock, "Foster-Home Care for Unmarried Mothers," The Child, III (September, 1938), 51-55.

social action to ameliorate the condition.

Financial Assistance

Only five of the ten unmarried mothers needed financial aid from the Family Service Agency of Savannah, and this was supplemented in four cases by private citizens and the Travelers Aid Society. This agency secured charity rate tickets for two of the mothers whom the Family Service Agency of Savannah assisted in returning to their legal residences. The records showed close cooperative contacts between the Family Service Agency of Savannah and the Travelers Aid Society.

From the Department of Public Welfare one mother was granted aid on a temporary basis from general assistance funds. It was clearly shown by the records that the services of this agency are limited by inadequate local and state funds.

Other Services

Other community resources used in meeting the needs of these mothers were out-of-town agencies, vocational rehabilitation, the community's two psychiatrists and a school counselor. The Family Service Agency of Savannah made thirty-eight contacts with out-of-town agencies by telephone, letters and telegrams in helping four of the mothers.

The Savannah Vocational Rehabilitation office was consulted regarding a training course for a mother diagnosed as mental defective. At the time of referral, there was no service available for this unmarried mother, but the consultant agreed to ascertain what could be done to initiate a training program. The agency advised the Georgia State Employment Service of the qualification and need for employment of three

mothers. Through this office they were referred to permanent work. Psychiatric services were made available to two mothers at agency expense. The office of the School Counselor furnished one mother with a pair of shoes for her school age child.

One nursery for white unmarried mothers provided twenty-four hour service for babies under eighteen months, and one nursery for Negro babies provided ten-hour service to babies from two weeks to four years. The intake in each one was limited and could not meet the needs of these mothers. Only three of the babies were placed for nursery service.

In the more than 200 contacts made by the Family Service Agency of Savannah in using community resources for these ten unmarried mothers, the records showed that every effort was made to facilitate the referrals through good interpretation and definite appointments for the persons concerned. The resources were used in helping to understand the mother and in initiating treatment.

Previous studies have pointed out that because of the complexity of the problems of the unmarried mother and her child, it is essential that the services be of high quality, given as promptly as possible and offered in a spirit of warm human helpfulness. In spite of limited resources, it appears that the Family Service Agency of Savannah used existing resources to the fullest extent.

In a few situations, however, other resources were not considered in the treatment plans for the mothers. In a review of resources which might have been utilized, only two records showed some discussion about the recreational interests and the social needs of the mother.. Many authorities advocate group therapy through the church and other

religious organizations as a means of helping confused and distorted individuals. But the church and its influence on the mother and her family were indicated in only one case. The lack of service to the mothers in this area may be attributed to the short-term contacts by the Family Service Agency of Savannah and the mother's desire to become independent and self-directing in this respect.

Foremost in the resources used by the Family Service Agency of Savannah was the Social Service Index and the Children's Council of Chatham County. The Social Service Index provided the machinery for adequate social study and use of other agencies with which the client had had contact. According to Joanna C. Colcord:

Agencies dealing with individual problems would be constantly conflicting in the advice they offered or the service they rendered unless some central index were available from which they could learn what other agencies had had contact, in the past or in the present, with the same families or individuals.¹

The work of the Family Service Agency of Savannah with the unmarried mother and her family problems was implemented by the services of the Children's Council. The Children's Council by its charter is authorized to promote the welfare of children in Chatham County.² It operates as an agency and as a council by coordinating services to children and promoting demonstration projects. Since its inception, in 1941, many unmet needs in the community have been focalized.³

¹Joanna C. Colcord, Your Community (New York, 1939), p. 223.

²Spencer, op. cit., p. 86.

³Case work service to children's institutions was its first major project in the community. The community's school counseling service, Social Service Directory and the development of two children's agencies are results of the Council's efforts. Member agencies of the Council are composed of more than thirty private and public agencies and organizations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vengeance against the unmarried mother was largely influenced by the English laws, but out of the past has come the acceptance that unmarried motherhood is purposive behavior influenced by the life experiences of a girl and community lethargy. There were 80,000 unmarried mothers reported by the United States Children's Bureau in 1946, and the 22,000 babies born out-of-wedlock in other countries were supported by allotments from American service men. The problem is of national and inter-national concern as well as of local significance.

About sixty agencies and organizations provide health and social welfare services for the Savannah Community. There are fourteen agencies in the family and financial assistance area, twenty-two in the child welfare, twelve in the group work, ten in the health, and about six in the coordinating area. The ten records studied revealed no centralized case work service for the unmarried mother, but the Pre-Natal Clinic Supervisor of the Health Center worked closely with the Family Service Agency of Savannah in plans for the mothers coming to her attention.

The housing situations for all of the unmarried mothers were unsatisfactory. There are no institutional services for the Negro unmarried mother. The Florence Crittenton Home of Savannah is equipped to serve only fifteen white girls at a time. The services of all the agencies referred to in this study were of a social nature but limited funds, staff and practice did not provide an accurate interpretation

of the needs of unmarried mothers.

An analysis of the reasons for which unmarried mothers came to the Family Service Agency of Savannah revealed problems centered around health, shelter, placements and financial assistance. The need for help around and with concrete, environmental situations were foremost in all cases, and each application had emotional components. The ages of the mothers ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven, all but one possessed at least a grammar school education.

Most of the unmarried mothers came from large families with nine and ten siblings, and most of them were from marginal income homes. Of the ten mothers, nine proved not to be promiscuous but had fantasies about the fathers of their babies and were immature in emotional reactions and relations with other people and surroundings. The putative fathers were considered in seven cases and paternity and support were established in one case. The fathers were limited in education and occupational pursuits.

Analysis of the findings in the agency's use of community resources in helping the unmarried mother showed that treatment was largely environmental in scope and limited because of inadequate community facilities. The Family Service Agency of Savannah made more than 200 contacts with community resources in the area of health, legal aid, shelter, public and private financial assistance, and other services in regard to help for the ten unmarried mothers. The ten case records of these unmarried mothers revealed the need for obtaining more social history and information about ways of meeting the community inadequacies. This might stimulate understanding and

encouragement for better service through more community resources for unmarried mothers.

It might be concluded that additional services to all children will be made possible through the recently established Child Placement Agency and the pending Greenbriar Center for Negro Children. Both will prove of immeasurable help in planning for the children of unmarried mothers. Eventually the medical social service division of the Health Center will become an actuality. Services in the Juvenile Court will increase geared more to preventive service to all children in the Savannah community. Through the coordinated efforts of Chatham County Children's Council and the Chatham County Health Council, more community problems and needs, perhaps, can be concentrated upon and services, as treatment, will become paramount in the family and child caring agencies in the community.

On the basis of findings presented in this study the following recommendations are seen as a part of a more adequate program in meeting the needs of the unmarried mother:

1. A trained social worker in every case work agency operating in the community.
2. Placement facilities for pre- and post-natal care financed by the public funds with much flexibility in the public agency policy regarding unmarried mothers.
3. A maternity home with program and standards approved according to the United States Children's Bureau for the unmarried mother who is unable to adjust in a private home under public auspices.

4. Psychological services for unmarried mothers indicating a need for them and continued social services for those showing more deep-rooted problems.

5. More coordinated local interest in community lacks, which contribute to problems of the unmarried mother and her family relative to economic, recreational and community opportunities.

The need for developing community resources, coordinating the services already established and placing case work services where they will be available to a mother at an early stage is evident. An adequate program for meeting the needs of the unmarried mother in Savannah and its vicinity appears to be the responsibility of the public health and welfare agencies, supplemented by expanded cooperative service, intensive community research and education on the part of private agencies.

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE

A. IDENTIFICATION DATA

Family Data:

Record No. _____ Marital Status (S,M,W,D,Sep.) _____
Birth Date _____ Birth place _____ School Gr. _____
Occupation (Father) _____ Income \$ _____
(Mother) _____ Income _____
(Siblings) _____ Income _____
_____ Income _____
_____ Income _____
_____ Income _____

S.S.I Report _____

Date of opening _____ Source of referral _____ Date of Closing _____

Reason for referral _____

B. Diagnosis of Situation and Treatment _____

Community Resources Used _____ Public _____ Private _____ Other _____

For Whom Used _____

Date of which use was initiated _____

Source of stimulation _____ Case Worker _____ Client _____ Other _____

Type of initial contact between case worker and resource:

Telephone _____ Letter _____ Personal Interview _____ Other _____

Place of interview _____

Name and position of person at resource contacted _____

C. EVALUATION OF USE OF RESOURCES IN RELATION TO DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT:

Extent of use (frequency, continuity, etc.) _____

Factors interfering with effective use of resources _____

Client's reaction _____

How were other members of the family affected? _____

The negative and positive values in the use of resources _____

D. PREPARATION FOR USE OF RESOURCES:

Interpretation of resources to client _____

Interpretation of client to resources _____

Extent and type of contacts with resources:

Total _____
 Telephones _____
 Personal Interviews _____
 Letters _____
 Others _____

E. AVAILABLE BUT UNUSED RESOURCES: Public _____ Private _____ Other _____

F. RESOURCES NEEDED BUT UNAVAILABLE:

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